

# FAMILY STORY

## A CURIOUS CAMBRIDGESHIRE

ONE morning, now several years ago, Henry Goodove, solicitor, had a call from one of his most distinguished clients, the marquis of X., who brought with him a companion, and, on his companion's behalf, proposed to Goodove a novel and peculiar transaction. The companion was introduced as Philip Charmount. He was a young fellow, apparently of about 25 years, but looked worn and dissipated and having the air of a man whose nervous system was in a bad way. Goodove knew his name, having occasionally read it in the turf reports in the newspapers as an owner of race horses.

"Now, Goodove," said the marquis, "we want you to do business in a certain little matter which may be profitable to both of us. I hope we shall find you agreeable."

"What is the nature of the business, my lord?" asked Goodove.

"It's this," said the marquis; "my friend, Mr. Charmount, here has a horse for immediate sale, and he wants you to buy it."

The solicitor raised his eyebrows and shook his head.

"I never bought a horse in my life," he said, "and I know nothing about 'em. I am afraid, my lord, that you must look for a customer elsewhere."

"Ah," the other interposed. "But this is no ordinary horse deal that we're proposing. Is it, Charmount?"

"Most decidedly not," replied the young man addressed, in an emphatic tone.

"Do you follow the turf intelligence, Goodove?" inquired the marquis.

"Can't say I do, my lord. Never took much interest in racing."

"Well, at any rate, perhaps you know the name of the favorite for the Cambridgehire?"

"To be quite candid, my lord, I don't. But I suppose I can find it here," said Goodove, taking up the morning paper.

"Here we are, Prince Charming—100 to 12."

"That's him," said the marquis. "That's Charmount's horse, which we want you to buy."

"Before the race?" asked Goodove.

"Yes, before the race. And as it's run the day after to-morrow, there is, you can see, no time to waste over the transaction."

"From your wishing to sell him, under these circumstances, I presume that you do not fancy his chance," remarked the solicitor quietly.

"On the contrary," answered the marquis, with emphasis. "We fancy his chance very strongly. He has been highly tried under extra weight, and has come out of it splendidly—hasn't he, Charmount?"

"Magnificently," asserted Charmount, his face working with a peculiar and unaccountable excitement. "He's about as dead a cert, as ever ran."

"Then why do you wish to sell him?" was Goodove's natural rejoinder.

"Now, look here, Goodove," struck in the marquis, "Charmount's reason for selling the colt is, I can assure you, a very cogent one. At the same time it is a reason which, at present, we are unable to divulge. Our terms of sale, however, are such as will be highly profitable to the purchaser, and will guarantee him, in any event, a handsome return upon his money. When you have heard the details you will not fail to agree with me. They are as follows: That in the event of your consenting to buy the colt to-day for his proper value—£3,000—we will give you our joint undertaking to repurchase him from you for £4,000 next Thursday—the day after the race."

Henry Goodove opened his eyes.

"This is a most extraordinary proposal, my lord," he answered. "Do you clearly understand what you are offering?"

"Quite. Our offer amounts to this: That of you will accommodate us in this matter we will pay you a bonus of £1,000 in three days' time. Possibly more than £1,000; since, if Prince Charming wins the Cambridgehire, you, of course, as his owner, will have the stakes in addition."

"Well, then, gentlemen, it seems to me that it is scarcely necessary for the £3,000 to change hands. Because if—as I infer—you merely wish to saddle me with the technical ownership for the day of the race, I had better just buy him from you for a nominal sum, and—"

"No, no," exclaimed Charmount, excitedly. "That will not do, Mr. Goodove. The purchase must be bona fide. The full value must be paid down, and everything about it must be strictly regular. Nothing less will be the least use."

"I need hardly ask you such a question, my lord," said the solicitor. "But this secret—you will assure me that it is of no illegal or dishonorable nature?"

"Most certainly I will. Upon that point you have my unqualified assurance," replied the marquis warmly.

"Very well, my lord," said Henry Goodove, after a short reflection, "upon the strength of that assurance I will consent to do business."

"One thing more, gentlemen," he said. "Am I to claim public ownership of Prince Charming, or not? Personally—under the circumstances—I should prefer not to do so."

"Exactly," answered Charmount. "I ought to have mentioned that. I wish the colt to remain, publicly, in my name. I have no desire for anyone, except ourselves, to learn that he has ever changed hands."

"Very well," said the solicitor, with a nod. "Then I will exercise no rights of ownership."

"But you are his owner—recollect that you are his bona fide owner," exclaimed Charmount, with sudden energy.

Goodove went down to Newmarket quietly, by himself. When the horses came out for the preliminary canter he watched them with great interest. By aid of his race card he soon recognized Prince Charming, a chestnut colt, with fine swinging stride, ridden by a famous jockey in the Charmount col.

ore—apple green and black sleeves. After a false start the flag fell. Soon the heavy thud of hoofs reached Goodove's ear, and the shouts and applause of the public, who lined the course, were borne nearer and nearer. He grew really excited. His heart beat fast. His breath came in gasps. The horses were close up to him at the finish. Some five or six seemed to flash by in a mass with a mighty thundering of hoofs. The jockey's arms and whips worked like the sails of windmills. There—ah! there was the apple green and black sleeves—to the front of the pack. People's voices arose in a storm of shouts, curses, cheers. Goodove's voice involuntarily mingled with them. The perspiration stood upon his forehead. He felt half suffocated.

Prince Charming's number was hoisted first.

He was soon aroused from his absorbed condition by the gruff voice of a man speaking at his elbow:

"The curse of the Charmounts has gone wrong at last."

"Eh? I beg your pardon," observed Goodove, turning toward the speaker, a short, red-faced man, who, from his appearance and dress, might probably have been a cattle dealer.

"I wasn't speaking to you, mister," replied the other, rather rudely.

"No, I know," said Goodove, too much interested by the man's allusion to the Charmounts to take offense at his words; "but you said something about the curse of the Charmounts, and not understanding what you meant I—"

"Not understand what I meant by the 'curse of the Charmounts'?" interrupted the man, regarding Goodove with contemptuous surprise. "Ever been at Newmarket before, mister?"

"Never, until to-day."

"Ah, that accounts for it, then. Well, I praps you don't know that never till this blessed day has a horse owned by the Charmount family won a race on the heath for fifty years."

"No, I was not aware of that," replied Goodove, growing very interested.

"And, 'tain't because they've not had good horses," continued the dealer, impressively. "They had some of the very best. It's because the family's been under a curse as regards this heath."

"Under a curse? How is that?"

"Well, you must know, old Tom Charmount, grandfather of the present man, played a friend of his a dirty trick about a Cambridgehire fifty years ago. I don't know all about the lads and outs, but it was something like this: Tom Charmount had his friend's horse got at the night before the race, and the horse which was considered a cert—got beat in consequence. The friend had planked all he was worth on the colt, and his defeat simply broke the poor beggar. He blew his brains out the same night, but not till he sought out old Tom Charmount and cursed him. And the result of that curse has been that no Charmount has won a race on Newmarket race heath ever since."

Henry Goodove was now deeply interested. The true explanation of Philip Charmount's inexplicable conduct was beginning to dawn on him.

"But was this generally known?" he exclaimed. "And did the public believe it? Because, if that was the case, I should not be so surprised. Prince Charming to be made favorite."

"Bless you, mister," was the half-contemptuous reply. "Prince Charming was so well in—about seven pounds below his proper weight—that if it hadn't been for the curse of the Charmounts his price would have been less than half what it was."

"Did—er—do you happen to know whether Mr. Charmount himself believes in the curse?" asked Goodove eagerly.

"I'm sure he does. Couldn't do otherwise, after the awful ill-luck he's had at Newmarket. Besides, and I've heard this from a reliable source, he has resorted to all kinds of subterfuges to avoid it at different times—such as nominally transferring his colts to his friends and such like dodges. But they were never no use, bless you, and weren't likely to be. Providence ain't to be circumvented so easy as that."

When Charmount came next day in great jubilation to effect Prince Charming's repurchase, he gave substantially the same explanation as Goodove had picked up on Newmarket heath, adding at the end:

"I had before tried to avoid the operation of the curse by a collusive transfer of my horses to some of my friends. But no good came of it. It then occurred to me that a bona fide sale of Prince Charming to one who knew nothing about the curse, and bought the colt without intending to evade it, might perhaps work the necessary charm. The result you know."

"Umph," said Goodove. "Then you believe that our little deal actually circumvented Providence?"

"Can you doubt it?" cried Charmount emphatically, as he handed the solicitor his check—London Truth.

**Insect that Can Cut Metal.**

The Zopherus Melicatus is the only species of American beetle that has strength enough in its mandibles to cut metal. This curious faculty of zopherus was accidentally discovered by F. W. Devoe, a member of the New York Microscopical Society. A friend had sent Mr. Devoe some specimens of this queer species of bug from the Northern States of South America. The microscopist was busily engaged when the insects arrived and placed the creatures in a glass jar having a metal top in which the porcelain cap was wanting. Within less than forty-eight hours they had cut holes in the metal sufficient to get their heads through, and would soon have escaped had their operations remained undetected. By careful experiment Mr. Devoe found that the force necessary to do such cutting was equal to 300 grammes.—San Francisco Examiner.

The very young are quite as anxious to be old as the very old are to be young.

**Power of a Personality.**  
A writer who reached Naples after the event, heard from the lips of the people an account of the taking of that city by Garibaldi.

The king was still there; the Neapolitan police were sullen and inactive; what the action of the military would be was not known, and upon it depended the fortune of the hour.

The people turned out in a body to witness the arrival of Garibaldi. Numbers of them climbed upon the engine and cars of the slowly approaching train which bore the general and his staff to the city, and at the station the whole population seemed gathered.

Entering a carriage with Cozzani, Garibaldi started, followed by three other carriages containing his officers of staff.

The fortress of St. Elmo bristled with guns and gunners, and they were ordered to fire and clear the streets with grape-shot as soon as the Garibaldians were within range. On the carriage came slowly, amid a roar of "vivas."

As it approached the guns of Castello Nuovo, the artillerymen, with lighted matches in their hands, pointed the guns. At that moment the voice of Garibaldi rose above the uproar, commanding:

"Slower! slower! Drive slower!"

This he reiterated until the frightened coachman instinctively obeyed the man whom no one disobeyed.

Then under the very mouth of the guns, and before the gunners who were already under orders to "fire" Garibaldi rose to his feet in the carriage with one hand on his breast, and looked fixedly at the artillerymen. A silence fell upon the tumultuous crowd; those who were present declared it was as if Garibaldi magnetized them.

Three times the order to fire was given, and with his own fate and Italy's in the balance, the general stood looking upon the men. At the third order the gunners flung away their matches, threw their caps in the air, and shouted, "Viva Garibaldi!"

The city was taken.

**There is No Joy in Leadville Now.**

There used to be a deal more variety and life in Leadville than there is now, says the Louisville Courier-Journal.

In its early days every phase of human nature was represented here, and if there was any wickedness common to any other section of the globe of which this camp had no specimen some public-spirited bad man would import a supply. It was a lively mining camp in all that the term implies and never hid the light of its wickedness under a bushel. Nothing was hidden, neither the saloons nor the gambling houses nor the worst places. The man who wanted to be bad need seek but lightly for an opportunity. As for the diversification of an impromptu duel to the death, that was so easily obtained as to quickly lose its charm. Everybody carried a "gun," and, soon or late, everybody used it with a fellow-being for a target.

Now this is largely changed. Leadville is not yet a prominent way station on the route to the better land, but is as peaceful as the average town of its size in or out of the mining region.

Men here are too busy to attend to the affairs of their neighbors; there does not seem to be an undue amount of drinking, and business goes on about as it does elsewhere. State street is still here, and those who knew it in other days may be interested in knowing that its sanitary condition from a moral standpoint is still bad and needing fumigation and disinfection. An energetic and general conflagration along that thoroughfare would result in a purification of the moral and physical atmosphere. Still, I contend that Leadville is no worse than many other towns, and by comparison with some of them, and especially with its former self, is a bright and shining light set upon a hill.

**Mirrors Do Not Flatter.**

Girls who are woefully dissatisfied with their personal appearance, as seen in a looking-glass, may gain comfort from the fact that they are much better-looking than their mirrors tell them. Even the very best plate-glass has a greenish tinge, which does not impart a flattering hue to the complexion, and waves and ripples on the hair are not seen to full advantage in the reflection. Another comforting assurance is that no one criticizes a face so severely as the owner does herself, when close to the mirror, and therefore aggravating little blemishes which annoy the scrutinizer are not patent. So, girls who are despairing of your looks, take consolation from this, and believe that you are far nicer in others' eyes than you are in your own.—The Princess.

**Probably a Barber.**

In a New York street car. Loquacious passenger, addressing his neighbor, who is reading his morning paper:

"Nice day."

"No response."

"Any news to-day?"

"No recognition."

"Cars move very slow this morning."

"Silence thickens."

"Any news from Cuba?"

"Could hear a pin drop."

"Guess we'll have rain before night."

"Stillness."

"Going fast?"

"My dear sir," at last replied the silent man, "will you be so kind as to inform me whether you are a prize fighter or a barber?"—Yonkers Statesman.

**Bone Meal in Macaroni.**

Neapolitan and macaroni are no longer inseparable. The Neapolitan police happened to observe lately that large quantities of bones were ground finely and incorporated in the dough, because somebody had discovered that bone meal imparts an extra "delicious" flavor to the national dish. Subsequently a rumor went abroad, and is still there, that most of these favoring bones came from old graveyards, and now the macaroni consumption in Naples is down to zero.

**A Coincidence.**

Can it be that there is any possible connection between two items which have been going the rounds of the press lately, one to the effect that the Emperor of Germany is an expert poker player and the other that it cost Lord Londale \$200,000 to entertain William recently.—Louisville Post.

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